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# **Elections in Guatemala**

## *2019 General Elections*

### Frequently Asked Questions

Americas

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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## Frequently Asked Questions

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### *Disclosure:*

*These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Guatemalan elections authorities as of June 11, 2019, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.*

## When is Election Day?

On June 16, 2019, Guatemala will hold first-round presidential, legislative and local elections. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.<sup>1</sup> The upcoming elections mark the country's ninth electoral cycle since the 1985 Constitution restored democracy.

## Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?

During these elections, citizens registered to vote in Guatemala will go to the polls to elect:

- A president and a vice president;
- 160 deputies to the Congress of the Republic;
- 20 deputies to the Central American Parliament; and
- 340 mayors<sup>2</sup> and approximately 3,965 posts in municipal councils.

All positions will serve four-year terms, from 2020-24.

The president and vice president are elected on the same ticket by an absolute majority of over 50 percent of the votes. The outcome of the first round will determine if a second round is necessary. The president of Guatemala is not permitted to serve a second term, and a former vice president may run for the presidency only after four years out of the post.

## How is Guatemala's political system structured?

Guatemala is a presidential republic with three branches of government: executive, legislative and judicial, as established in Article 141 of the 1985 Constitution.

The executive branch consists of the president of the Republic of Guatemala, the vice president of the Republic of Guatemala and the ministers from their respective departments. The president leads the government, state and multiparty system.

The Congress of the Republic exercises legislative power and is a unicameral legislature elected by closed party list proportional representation. Of the 160 seats in the Congress, 128 are elected directly in 23 multimember electoral districts. Each electoral district represents one of Guatemala's 22 departments (administrative divisions), except that the department of Guatemala, which contains the capital city, is divided into two districts. The election of the remaining 32 representatives occurs from a national list through proportional representation. The increase in the number of deputies from 158 to 160 is part of the 2016 reforms to the electoral law.<sup>3</sup>

The Supreme Court of Justice exercises judicial powers in Guatemala. The Appellate Court, the First Instance Courts, Peace Courts (also known as Minor Courts) and a few other courts that specialize in certain areas of the law. The Supreme Court of Justice is composed of 13 magistrates selected for

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tse.org.gt/index.php/comunicacion/noticias/149-tse-inaugura-jornada-de-actualizacion-de-datos-y-de-empadronamiento-en-centro-comercial-de-la-zona-11>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.as-coa.org/content/guide-2019-latin-american-elections/guatemala>

<sup>3</sup> <http://pdpa.georgetown.edu/ElecSys/Guate/guate.html>

concurrent periods for five-year terms with the presidential post rotated every year between the magistrates.

To lead the local governments, the governors of the 22 departments are appointed by the president for four-year terms, while the task of governing the 340 municipalities falls under the authority of mayors and councils who are directly elected by the people.

## **What is the election management body? What are its powers?**

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) is the election management body of Guatemala. In 1982, the Organic Law of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, passed under Executive Decree 30-83, established the TSE. The decree declares that the TSE is an autonomous body independent of any other government authority.

The TSE is directly responsible for regulating all activities related to the exercise of citizens' electoral rights – political parties, the use of political rights and organization and serving as electoral authorities – aiming to promote free and transparent elections in Guatemala. The TSE is also responsible for election dispute resolution. Additionally, as of 1983, the TSE is the entity charged with convening the National Constituent Assembly. The National Assembly both wrote and now enforces the Political Constitution of the Republic, which, along with the Electoral and Political Parties Law (LEPP), governs the TSE.<sup>4</sup> The 2016 reformed LEPP expanded the TSE's oversight powers, including over political and campaign finance as well as campaigns' use of the media. Since the revisions to the LEPP were passed, the TSE has established new specialized units to comply with these new powers, including the Media and Public Opinion Studies Specialized Unit and the Political Party Finance Control and Oversight Specialized Unit.

Five incumbent magistrates and five alternate magistrates make up the TSE. The magistrate selection process involves candidate nominations by the Postulation Commission, followed by approval by a two-thirds majority of the total deputies of the Congress of the Republic. The magistrates serve a term of six years. The current magistrates' term runs from 2014-20.

## **What are the phases of the electoral process?**

The 2016 electoral reforms divide the electoral process into three main phases: postulation of candidates, the electoral campaign and Election Day.

### **Phase 1: Postulation of Candidates**

The first phase of the electoral cycle encompasses the convening of the elections, candidate registration and naming of the oversight officials from political parties. Phase 1 begins when elections are announced and concludes on the last day of registration for both voters and candidates. During this electoral cycle, the first phase ran from January 18-March 17. During this period, electoral advertisements are not allowed.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.tse.org.gt/index.php/tse/historia>

## **Phase 2: Electoral Campaign**

During the second phase, based on the lists submitted by political parties to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), candidates running for popular election can begin their electoral campaigning. The TSE's Media and Public Opinion Studies Specialized Unit plays a large role during this phase in monitoring compliance with media and other communications guidelines, as well as associated financial regulations.

These are the key steps in this phase of the process:

- The TSE informs political parties of the locations of the Vote Reception Boards (JRVs), which are responsible for ensuring suffrage;
- Magistrates name the citizens integrated at each level into the departmental electoral boards;
- State security forces' influence is removed from all electoral rolls, including municipal;
- The inscription of candidates running for the mayoral and municipal offices through a civic committee, rather than through a political party, remains open until midway through Phase 2;
- Municipal electoral boards are integrated;
- The electoral roll is printed and published by the Citizens Registry and includes each citizen's polling location assignment, including the exact polling station and table;
- The TSE finishes creating the JRVs. The JRV for each voting table is assigned four people and an alternate;
- Electoral advertisements are suspended two days before the election; and
- Lastly, after noon on the day before the election, the sale of alcohol is prohibited in all national territory.<sup>5</sup>

The second phase begins 90 days before Election Day and ends 36 hours before this date.

## **Phase 3: Election Day**

The third phase regulates Election Day processes, which include the casting and tabulation of votes, and includes the possible second round of elections for president and vice president.

## **What are the reforms enacted in the new 2016 Electoral and Political Parties Law?**

Reforms to the Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala begin at the National Assembly, are approved by the Congress of the Republic and are ratified by a popular consultation. Certain parts of the document cannot be modified, specifically articles pertaining directly to the form of government, including Articles 140, 141 (Subsection G), 186 and 187, the principle of no reelection for the presidency and the section that protects these clauses from being modified.<sup>6</sup>

Guatemala's 2019 general elections will be the first held under the major reforms to the Electoral and Political Parties Law (LEPP), passed in 2016 as Decree 26-2016. The reform process occurred through the

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/politica/calendario-de-las-elecciones-en-guatemala-2019/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://elsiglo.com.gt/2016/10/11/reformas-a-la-constitucion/>

issuance of articles in the decree. The purpose of this decree is to reduce corruption, increase transparency in the financing of political parties and strengthen the Supreme Electoral Tribunal's (TSE) oversight capabilities to improve its electoral systems and promote equality in public spaces and media sources. The articles mark significant improvements in the democratization of political parties, financial controls, the distribution of electoral advertisements on social media and other communications outlets, and establish a new electoral calendar.

**Key reforms in Decree 26-2016 include:**

- As of 2007, the electoral cycle began in May with elections in September and second rounds in November. Article 196 of the LEPP reformed by Article 38 of Decree 26-2016 establishes the new electoral calendar, outlining the three phases of the electoral process: (1) the administrative phase of candidate inscription, which runs from January 19-March 17; (2) the political campaign phase, which runs from March 18-June 14; (3) Election Day and the second round of elections.
- **Out-of-country voting:** Article 1 of the decree adds two paragraphs to Article 12 of the LEPP directly related to out-of-country voting.
- **Equal access to publicity in the media:** Through Article 51 of the decree, which reforms Article 220 of the LEPP, the TSE emphasizes its commitment to the equitable distribution in media and communication outlets for political parties.
- **Reduction to the campaign ceiling and the depression of private electoral financing:** LEPP Article 19, as reformed by Article 4 of the decree, emphasizes the abidance by political parties and electoral civic committees to the new financial regulations. Article 21 of the LEPP, reformed by Article 6 of the decree, establishes financial regulations, reducing the ceiling for private campaign finance.
- **Null voting procedures:** Article 38 of the decree reforms Articles 196 of the LEPP and Article 41 of the decree reforms Article 203 of the LEPP. Revisions to these articles directly establish new procedures for this process. The changes include requiring that if the number of null votes makes up more than half of all votes counted, the voting process will have to be repeated regardless of the election results.

Civil society organizations and other entities within the government now seek a second group of reforms with the intent of continuing to improve the electoral and political systems and the judicial branch of government.

## **Who can vote in these elections? How many registered voters are there? How do citizens register to vote?**

Registered Guatemalans over the age of 18 are eligible to vote. As of March 2019, there are 8,149,793<sup>7</sup> registered or “empowered” voters, as they are referred to in Guatemala, including 4,386,509 women and 3,763,284 men. The number increased by 592,920 from the 7,556,873 (4,074,450 women and

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.tse.org.gt/estadisticas/2019/03/Electores.pdf>

3,482,423 men) who were registered in the 2015 elections. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal has a [website](#) to facilitate the registration process. The deadline for voter registration in these elections was March 17.

Voters between the ages of 18 and 25 make up 15 percent of the electorate, or 1,200,202 voters. In Guatemala, the police and active-duty members of the armed forces cannot vote and must remain in their facilities on Election Day.<sup>8</sup>

## Will there be out-of-country voting?

For the first time in the country's history, Guatemalans who reside abroad will be able to vote for president and vice president. Article 1 of Decree 26-2016, which reformed the Electoral and Political Parties Law (LEPP), establishes that:

“The Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) with support from the state institutions to which this request was made will conduct the necessary actions to ensure the right. Out-of-country voting will take place on the same date as Election Day in Guatemala and in all cases the TSE will be charged with the enforcement of all rules relative to the implementation of the voting process for all Guatemalan citizens residing out of the country.”

The TSE, through the Out-of-Country Voting Specialized Unit and the Out-of-Country Voting Electoral Board, organized in-person voting for 63,267 registered Guatemalans who reside in the United States in four voting centers, one in each of the following locations:

- Los Angeles, California, with 22,802 registered voters;
- New York, New York, with 15,638 registered voters;
- Silver Spring, Maryland, with 14,310 registered voters; and
- Houston, Texas, with 10,517 registered voters.

Article 21 of the LEPP commits the TSE to spread information through the web and other social media sources promoting out-of-country voting.<sup>9</sup> In preparation for this electoral cycle, the TSE launched a campaign to inform and register voters, including access to an online form and the mobile application called *Vote for Guate*.<sup>10</sup>

## Who are the presidential candidates?

Candidates running in this election must meet the following criteria:

- Complete the registration form;
- Provide a birth certificate;
- Provide a record of no claim issued by the Comptroller General of Accounts if the prospective candidate has managed public funds;

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.tse.org.gt/estadisticas/2019/03/Electores.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.tse.org.gt/images/LEPP.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.publinews.gt/gt/noticias/2019/01/22/voto-extranjero-definen-formas-emitir-sufragio.html>

- Be of Guatemalan origin and exercise their citizenship rights; and
- Be nominated by the political party's national assembly.

The request for candidacy then goes to the Citizen Registry of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), which must approve or reject the candidacy in accordance with the Electoral and Political Parties Law. If the candidate is approved, then the candidacy is formalized. If the candidate is rejected, he or she can take the case to the judicial court.

As of June 11, there are 19 presidential and vice presidential candidates nominated by political parties' national assemblies to run in this election and approved by the TSE. As recently as June 10, the Constitutional Court made final decisions on the eligibility of candidates for several posts, including the presidency, to be on the ballot.

- **Party: Advance (*Avanza*)**
  - Candidate: Danilo Roca
  - Running Mate: Manuel María Martínez
- **Party: Convergence (*Convergencia*)**
  - Candidate: Benito Morales
  - Running Mate: Claudia Valiente
- **Party: Compromise, Renovation and Order (*Compromiso, Renovación y Orden, CREO*)**
  - Candidate: Héctor Estrada
  - Running Mate: Yara Argueta
- **Party: Meeting for Guatemala (*Encuentro por Guatemala*)**
  - Candidate: Manfredo Marroquín
  - Running Mate: Óscar Adolfo Morales
- **Party: National Convergence Front (*Frente de Convergencia Nacional, FCN Nación*)**
  - Candidate: Estuardo Galdámez
  - Running Mate: Betty Marroquín
- **Party: Movement for the Liberation of the People (*Movimiento de Liberación de los Pueblos, MLP*)**
  - Candidate: Thelma Cabrera
  - Running Mate: Neftalí López
- **Party: Guatemala Humanist Party (*Partido Humanistas de Guatemala, Humanistas*)**
  - Candidate: Edmond Mulet
  - Running Mate: Jorge Pérez
- **Party: Free Party (*Partido Libre, Libre*)**
  - Candidate: Aníbal García
  - Running Mate: Carlos Pérez
- **Party: Unionist Party (*Partido Unionista, PU*)**
  - Candidate: Pablo Duarte
  - Running Mate: Roberto Villeda
- **Party: We Can (*Podemos*)**



- Candidate: Roberto Arzú García-Granados
- Running Mate: José Farías
- **Party: Work and Productivity Party (*Partido Productividad y Trabajo*)**
  - Candidate: José Luis Chea Urruela
  - Running Mate: Mario Guillermo González
- **Party: Everyone Together for Guatemala (*Todos Juntos por Guatemala, Todos*)**
  - Candidate: José Guillermo Alfredo “Fredy” Cabrera
  - Running Mate: Ricardo Sagastume
- **Party: Hope’s National Unity (*Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza, UNE*)**
  - Candidate: Sandra Torres
  - Running Mate: Carlos Raúl Morales
- **Party: United (*Unidos*)**
  - Candidate: Luis Velásquez
  - Running Mate: Arturo Soto
- **Party: National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unity (*Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca, URNG*)**
  - Candidate: Pablo Ignacio Ceto Sánchez
  - Running Mate: Blanca Estela Colop
- **Party: Let’s Go for a Different Guatemala (*Vamos por un Guatemala Diferente, Vamos*)**
  - Candidate: Alejandro Giammattei
  - Running Mate: Guillermo Castillo
- **Party: Victory (*Victoria*)**
  - Candidate: Amílcar Rivera
  - Running Mate: Erico Can Saquic
- **Party: Vision with Values (*Visión con Valores, Viva*)**
  - Candidate: Isaac Farchi
  - Running Mate: Ricardo Flores
- **Party: Winaq**
  - Candidate: Manuel Villacorta
  - Running Mate: Lilian Izabel Hernández Estrada<sup>11</sup>

## Why are these elections important?

Guatemala is conducting its first cycle with significant reforms to its electoral processes, new financial mechanisms for political parties and a new electoral calendar. Similar to the 2015 elections, which were heated by the resignation and imprisonment of former President Otto Pérez Molina, poverty, electoral violence<sup>12</sup> and corruption allegations about candidates and political leaders are at the heart of the debate in the lead-up to the June 2019 elections. Two of the front-running candidates, Thelma Aldana and Zury Ríos, were deemed ineligible to run by the Constitutional Court. Former Attorney General Aldana, a prominent anti-corruption advocate, was accused of corruption on questionable charges – the

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.publine.ws/gt/noticias/2019/01/01/partidos-politicos-participaran-elecciones-2019.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.idea.int/es/news-media/news/es/las-claves-de-las-elecciones-generales-en-guatemala>

judge who issued her arrest warrant is under investigation for accepting bribes to issue the warrant.<sup>13</sup> Ríos is the daughter of the former Guatemalan dictator Efraín Ríos Montt, who was convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity; the Guatemalan Constitution bars from the presidency any close relatives of those came to power by force or coup.<sup>14</sup> The Constitutional Court also decided that Edwin Escobar was ineligible to run for the presidency. Additionally, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal annulled the candidacies of Mario Estrada and Mauricio Radford due to Estrada's current detention in the United States for drug and arms conspiracies and Radford's links to criminal proceedings around abuse of authority since 2010. In addition, current President Jimmy Morales's decision to expel the International Commission Against Impunity (CICIG),<sup>15</sup> the United Nations anti-corruption body, is exacerbating concerns. The results of the upcoming elections will be a deciding factor in the future of the CICIG and the continuance of its anti-corruption efforts in the country.<sup>16</sup>

## **To what extent do women have equal access to political participation?**

Guatemala has both national and international tools to promote the rights and participation of women.

Domestically, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) has in place several laws that stress its commitment to eradicating gender-based violence and aim to promote the participation of women. These specifically include:

- Law for the Prevention, Sanction, and Eradication of Interfamily Violence, Decree Num. 97-96;
- Law the for the Integral Promotion Dignity of Women, Decree Num. 7- 99;
- Law for Social Development, Decree Num. 42-2001;
- Law for Urban and Rural Development Councils, Decree Num. 11-2002;
- Municipal Code, Decree Num. 12-2002;
- General Decentralization Law, Decree Num. 14-2002;
- National Languages Law, Decree Num. 19-2003;
- Law on Educational Promotion Against Discrimination, Decree Num. 81-2002;
- Law on Universal, Equitable and Quality Access to Family Planning Services and its Integration into the National Program on Reproductive Rights, Decree Num. 87-2005; and
- Law Against Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women, Decree Num. 22-2008.

The TSE also included in its Institutional Strategic Plan (2014-20) policies that promote women's participation in the political and electoral spheres, such as its Gender Equality Policy, which establishes actions that facilitate the increased representation and participation of indigenous women, including "Mayan, garífuna, xinka and mestiza or ladina women" in the electoral process.

In terms of international treaties, Guatemala signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women through Decree Num. 49-82. It also incorporated actions to meet the

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Guatemala-Constitutional-Court-Rejects-Candidacy-of-anti-Graft-Lawyer-Thelma-Aldana-20190516-0010.html>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/05/guatemala-dictator-daughter-barred-presidential-race-190514001649420.html>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.as-coa.org/content/guide-2019-latin-american-elections/guatemala>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-46735423>

requirements of the Global Action Platform (Beijing, 1995) through the implementation of its third policy by the Department of Political Promotion for Women and other national plans (i.e., its annual operational plans).<sup>17</sup>

## **How are electoral authorities promoting equal access to the electoral process for persons with disabilities?**

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) takes various actions to ensure that persons with disabilities have the same opportunities to exercise suffrage as the rest of the population. According to Guatemala's electoral laws, citizens with disabilities have the right to vote with the assistance of a person of their choice.

To ensure equity, the TSE:

- Has braille ballots available for voters with visual impairments;
- Has voting booths that are physically accessible for voters who use a wheelchair; and
- Provides electoral workers with an orientation on how to administer the vote to persons with disabilities and respect their rights.

In March 2019, the TSE developed an Agreement for a Transparent, Ethical and Peaceful Electoral Process, which included commitments by political parties to promote more inclusive elections. One of the commitments in the document states that electoral campaigns must avoid harassment and violence, including in messages and images, toward women, indigenous populations, persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ communities or others.<sup>18</sup> Another commitment establishes that social media and other communications technology not be used to spread disinformation or to propagate hate speech against women, persons with disabilities, indigenous populations or LGBTIQ communities.<sup>19</sup>

## **How does the election management body use social media?**

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) has a Media and Public Opinion Studies Specialized Unit (UEMCEO), which is particularly important given the 2016 reforms to the electoral cycle. For Phase 2 of the cycle, the Electoral and Political Parties Law defines electoral advertisements as the mechanisms utilized by political organizations during the electoral process, which include public meetings; marches; written, audio and televised communications; and social media. The UEMCEO serves as a technical liaison with political organizations. The TSE uses Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube to engage with voters and distribute information relevant to the Guatemalan elections. As of June 10, the TSE has over 212,844 followers on Facebook,<sup>20</sup> 97,500 followers on Twitter,<sup>21</sup> 3,006 followers on Instagram<sup>22</sup> and 499 YouTube subscribers.<sup>23</sup> These numbers have been steadily increasing throughout the 2019 electoral

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<sup>17</sup> [http://tse.org.gt/images/POLITICA\\_EQUIDAD\\_TSE.pdf](http://tse.org.gt/images/POLITICA_EQUIDAD_TSE.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> <https://republica.gt/2019/03/11/compromisos-partidos-politicos-campana-tse/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://republica.gt/2019/03/11/compromisos-partidos-politicos-campana-tse/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/tseguatemala/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://twitter.com/TSEGuatemala>

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.instagram.com/tse\\_guatemala/](https://www.instagram.com/tse_guatemala/)

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPhs4gOsbpzbNOEa1ml85dg>

process. The TSE uses these platforms to encourage political participation, including to reach and register eligible Guatemalans, as well as to reach voters abroad, promote civic education and dispel misinformation circulating on social media. The TSE launched a registration app in preparation for its first out-of-country voting process and has made online resources available, such as its [Visible Elections Site](#), which provides general information and serves as a tool for reporting violations at the different electoral stages. The TSE also has an online [registration verification site](#) and offers access to its [online media unit's online resources](#), including public opinion studies, applications for national and international observers, [trainings](#) and a [virtual electoral library](#).

## What are the rules for campaign finance?

### Private Campaign Finance

The reformed Electoral and Political Parties Law (LEPP) establishes the rules for campaign finance, reducing the ceiling for private campaign finance from 1.00 to 0.50 USD per registered voter. While in 2015 the total limit was approximately 58.2 million GTQ, in 2019 it is nearly 29.7 million GTQ, or 3.8 million USD, for each of the 28 registered political parties.<sup>24</sup> Under the reformed LEPP, political parties must now have accounts in each one of the departments and municipalities where they are present. To verify political parties' financial management practices, the TSE can request financial information from the Comptroller General of Accounts, Fiscal Administration Superintendency and Bank Superintendency.

### Public Campaign Finance

According to the LEPP, the state will contribute financing to each political party at the equivalent in GTQ of 2.00 USD for every vote cast in favor for the offices of the president and vice president, or deputies in the National List. To obtain this right, the party must have obtained no less than five percent of the valid votes cast for the offices mentioned above or have at least one seat in these offices.

## What measures are in place to mitigate electoral violence?

While violence can take place at any point during the electoral cycle, it is commonly related to disagreements among voters about ballot box results and is especially prevalent at the local level. The domestic election observation group Mirador Electoral reported 20 violent deaths in the 2015 electoral cycle, of which 15 were involved in municipal politics.<sup>25</sup>

In 2015, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) conducted a risk assessment and mapped 74 municipalities identified as being at high risk for electoral violence. As the highest authority on elections, the TSE is responsible for coordinating electoral security with relevant stakeholders. To that end, and based on its risk assessment and mapping, the TSE has established electoral security working groups with the Ministry of Interior, Public Ministry, Ministry of Defense, National Police, emergency responders and others to mitigate and address electoral security issues that may occur on Election Day and the days following the elections. A Crisis Management Center (CMC) will be established at the TSE

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/politica/tse-fija-en-q29-millones-el-techo-de-campana-para-cada-partido-politico/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/politica/tse-busca-prevenir-conflictividad-electoral/>

election headquarters and staffed by representatives of the electoral security working group. The CMC will collect data from the local level that will allow for a coordinated response to any incidents of violence that may arise during this period and after the elections.

For this electoral cycle, the TSE developed an Agreement for a Transparent, Ethical and Peaceful Electoral Process, comprised of 15 commitments for political parties to promote an electoral process free of conflict and violence. The commitments emphasize peace and tolerance for all candidates and citizens, and 20 of the 28 registered parties signed the document.<sup>26</sup> The TSE also developed similar local-level ethical pacts for municipalities at higher risk of electoral violence.

## **Will there be observation during Election Day?**

Guatemala will have both [national](#) and [international](#) electoral observers. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) has an online portal through which these two types of observers can apply. According to its guidelines, national observers must be Guatemalan citizens, must have a photo identification card and cannot have an affiliation with a political party. International observers must receive an invitation by the TSE and have an interest in electoral observation. The Organization of American States has conducted 11 election monitoring missions in the country, with the most recent in 2015.<sup>27</sup>

## **How will voters cast their ballots?**

Voters will be able to cast their ballots in one of the 2,932 polling centers, which include several special voting stations, such as those available in hospitals. There will be approximately 105,277 poll workers. Voters can find information about the location of their respective voting centers and stations through the TSE's [voter information portal](#). The only documentation that voters are required to have is their personal identification card.<sup>28</sup>

## **How will votes be counted, tabulated and reported?**

The official vote count begins at 6:00 p.m. on Election Day. Votes are counted manually at each of the 21,098 Vote Reception Boards, including 108 in the United States, which each consist of five members, including a president. Poll watchers from political parties along with national and international observers oversee the vote counting process. As part of the process, the political party poll watchers witness, verify and sign the tally sheets submitted to the voting center for official transmission to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal's (TSE) National Preliminary Results Center. The TSE tabulation center will receive the tally sheets transmitted to them via scan technology. The TSE's transmission of preliminary results entity expects to announce the first results beginning at 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.ifes.org/news/guatemalan-political-parties-commit-transparent-ethical-and-peaceful-electoral-process>

<sup>27</sup> <https://theglobalamericans.org/guatemala/>

<sup>28</sup> [cajpe.org.pe](http://cajpe.org.pe)

## **Will there be a second round?**

The results from the first round of elections determine if a second round of elections will take place for the office of the president and vice president, which is necessary if no candidate ticket receives over 50 percent of the vote. The second round, if required, will take place on August 11 as a run-off between the top two vote-getters.

Additionally, based on the 2016 reforms, a second round for some contests may be required if the number of null votes is more than half of all votes counted. If the nullified election is for the offices of the president and vice president, then the repeated election will be scheduled for a Sunday in October, and if a second round is required, this must take place from 45-60 days after the first election.

If the null votes are not for the presidential contest, the repetition of the voting process will take place on the same date as the second presidential round.

## **When will official results be announced?**

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal is expected to announce preliminary results beginning at 8:00 p.m. on election night or shortly thereafter; however, according to Article 245 of the Electoral and Political Parties Law, the final official results must be announced within eight days after elections.

## Resources

- Decree Number 26-2016: <https://www.tse.org.gt/images/descargas/decreto262016.pdf>
- Electoral and Political Parties Law: <https://www.tse.org.gt/images/LEPP.pdf>
- Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) Media Unit online resources: <https://sidi.tse.org.gt/uemceo/>
- Virtual electoral library: [www.tse.org.gt/biblioteca2/](http://www.tse.org.gt/biblioteca2/)
- Virtual trainings provided by the TSE: [http://tse.org.gt/aula\\_virtual/moodle/](http://tse.org.gt/aula_virtual/moodle/)
- Visible Elections website, for general information and for reporting electoral violations: <https://eleccionesvisibles.gt/>
- Voter information portal: <https://endondevotas.tse.org.gt/>
- Voter registration statistics: <https://www.tse.org.gt/index.php/informacion-electoral/estadisticas-de-empadronamiento>
- Voter registration verification: <http://tse.org.gt/index.php/registro-ciudadano/consulta-empadronamiento>